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Fantastic Four

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HERO TEAM!

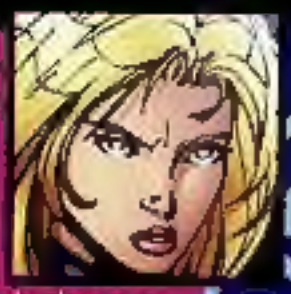
FANTASTIC FOUR

Reed Richards' fateful destiny began when he created the Excelsior -- a spacecraft designed to investigate a stellar anomaly approaching Earth. Doctor Doom took an interest in the astral phenomenon and secretly manipulated agents within the U.S. Military to neutralize the strange field with nuclear weapons deployed from the craft. Getting wind of this dastardly plan, Richards assembled a crew to intercept the shuttle. Joining him on his journey was his fiancee Sue Storm, her brother Johnny, and test pilot Ben Grimm. Their luck ran out when they were caught in the nuclear explosion and bombarded with cosmic radiation. The group made it back to Earth alive, but radically altered. They discovered the cosmic rays imbued them with amazing abilities. No longer were they an ordinary human quartet -- they were the FANTASTIC FOUR!

MR. FANTASTIC

Reed Richards. Besides being an eminent scientist in the field of astro physics, he is also the inimitable leader of the F.F. His body is immensely pliant, allowing him to stretch and contort his limbs to great degrees. He can flatten his form into that of a trampoline or distend it into a rubbery cable. Like his companions, Reed wears a costume woven from unstable molecules which adapt to his infinite variety of shapes.

INVISIBLE WOMAN

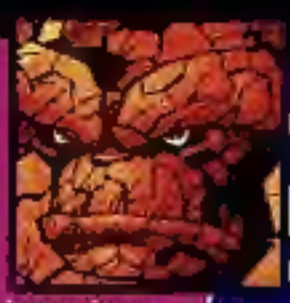


Sue Storm. Former head of the STORM FOUNDATION, the investment firm that funded most of Reed's experiments. She is also Reed's true love. Sue has the ability to render herself invisible to the naked eye. The same energy can be employed to form undetectable, impenetrable force fields. These fields can also be manipulated into simple shapes or projected as concessive blasts. Both powers can be extended to encompass others through intense concentration.

HUMAN TORCH

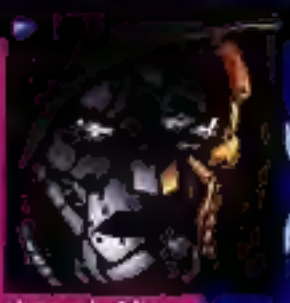
Johnny Storm. A hot-headed hot-shot who found himself with meta-human abilities to match. Leaving behind the life of a Vegas casino manager, Johnny dedicated himself to standing beside his extended family. On command, his body transformed into living flame! In this state he could fly and expel bolts of fire. In extreme situations, he could also channel all of his energy into one colossal nova-blast, burning with the intensity of a star!

THE THING



Benjamin J. Grimm knew the experience of flying into space would forever change his life. He had no clue how much! Soon after crash landing back on Earth he underwent a traumatic metamorphosis. His skin calcified and discolored into large chunks of craggy, orange stone. As this "thing", he can withstand enormous amounts of punishment. His imperviousness is equaled only by his titanic strength! Ben's sole weakness is perhaps his tragic disfigurement, which he compensates with a hearty sense of humor.

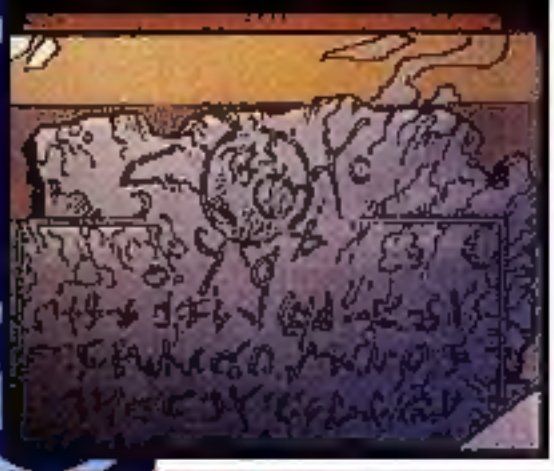
DR. DOOM

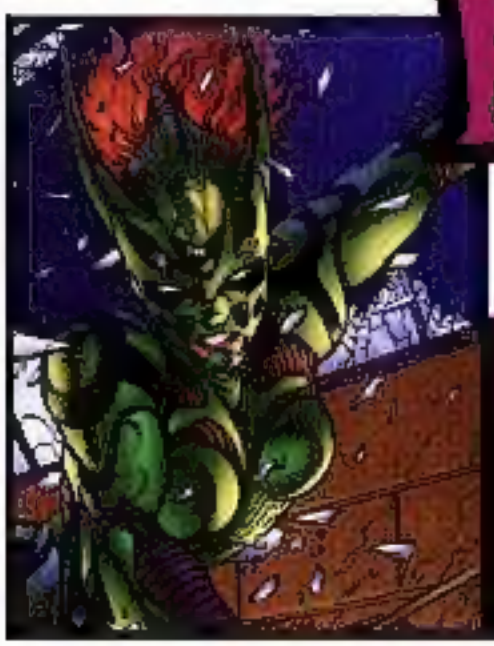


The black prince of the Atomic Knights of the Round Table. Victor always resented Reed's accomplishments, the admiration of his peers, and his intellect. Victor was driven to prove that he was far more ingenious. He decided to complete their earliest attempts at Promethium armor on his own. The experiment failed and Victor was horribly charred. After being exiled from the United States, Victor returned to his native Latveria to become its monarch. The iron mask he now wore would burn in the memories of his heroic, former companions. With neat infinite resources at his disposal, Doom vowed to see Reed annihilated!

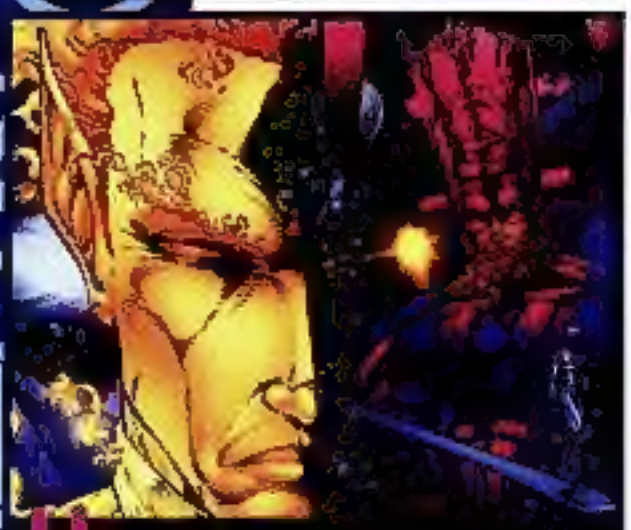
PREVIOUSLY IN Fantastic Four

Attending an archeological exhibit, Reed Richards notices some inscriptions on the newly discovered Makalu Tablet, which match those seen in the Mole Man's cave. He believes they may provide further information on the stellar anomaly that lead to their genetic boon.





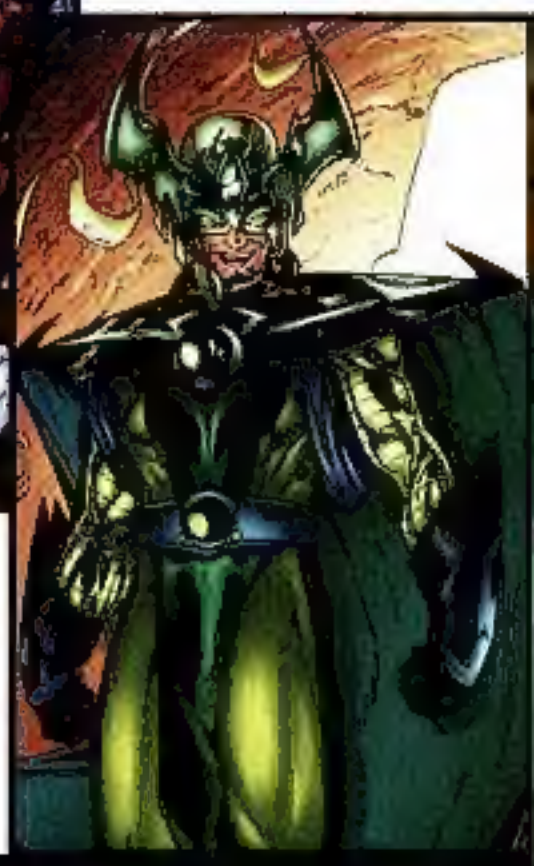
Before he can investigate further, an enigmatic assailant crashes into the museum and steals the artifact. The Human Torch takes off in hot pursuit but is ambushed by her lurking accomplices and transported back to their home -- the Great Refuge.



Meanwhile, across the universe, Galactus summons each of his heralds to join him in the consumption of a recently ripe planet in the Milky Way galaxy. Firelord, Terrax, the Silver Surfer, and others head for Earth to begin preparations for their master's arrival.

The F.F.'s rescue mission initially fails. Leaving them at the mercy of the Inhumans, a race of meta-beings who safeguard the caves of Terrigen Mist -- a powerful mutagenic gas contained underneath the city of Attilan.

Back home, the F.F. manage to elude the Inhumans and find the Torch. Much to their dismay, the Torch has allied with the Inhumans and appeals to his fellow teammates. The Inhumans stole the tablet to find a way to the source of the Terrigen Mists, whose passageways have been mysteriously blocked.



Once inside the caves, they quickly found the cause. Black Bolt's brother, Maximus, had journeyed into the caves weeks before and never returned. Exposure to the raw fumes drove him mad! Rallying a battalion of Alpha Primitives to his side, the insane Maximus intends to wrest control of the Great Refuge -- and after that, the world!

THE Stan Lee FANTASTIC FOUR

MADMEN & PROPHETS

JIM LEE — BRANDON CHOI — RON LIM

Phil Sampk — Pencils

PROLOGUE

HE IS CALLED GALACTUS

THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A FORGOTTEN RACE THAT PERISHED AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF TIME. HE HAS SINCE THEN BECOME A DREADED FORCE OF NATURE.

THE HARBINGER OF DOOM WHO TRAVERSES THE VAST COSMOS IN A NEVER-ENDING SEARCH FOR THE PRECIOUS PLANETARY LIFE-FORCE THAT HE NEEDS TO SUSTAIN HIMSELF.

RICHARD BENNETT, MIKE S. MILLER & HOMAGE STUDIOS | WILDSTORM FX

RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S | RUBEN DIAZ

DAVE LANPHEAR | BOB HARRAS

IT...

...IS...

...DONE!

HOW FARE YOU, MY MASTER?

THE ENERGY OF THIS PLANETOID SHALL SUFFICE TO STAVE OFF DEATH'S COLD TOUCH.

...BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO QUENCH MY HUNGER!

AS THE SHATTERED REMNANTS OF THE PLANET GROW COLD AND DARK IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE, GALACTUS GLOWS WITH THE NEW BIO-SPHERIC LIFE-FORCE THAT COURSES THROUGH HIS BODY.

IT SHALL, HOWEVER, SUSTAIN ME FOR THE DURATION OF OUR IMPENDING JOURNEY, MY HERALD.

BUT WE MUST MAKE HASTE BEFORE THIS ENERGY TOO IS CONSUMED.

WE ARE TO MEET THE OTHER *HERALDS* THERE?

YES, PLASMA.

THE TIME OF THE *HARVESTING* IS AT HAND.

WHERE ARE WE GOING, MY MASTER?

THERE!

THAT PLANET IS OUR FINAL DESTINATION, PLASMA.

EARTH PRIME!

THE TERRIGEN CAVERNS.

BENEATH THE CITY OF ATTILAN, HOME TO THE INHUMANS.

MAXIMUS IS ALIVE?

BUT THEN WHAT HAS HE BEEN DOING DOWN HERE ALL THIS TIME WHEN WE FEARED HIM LOST?

IT WOULD APPEAR THAT HE HAS SOMEHOW MANIPULATED THE POWER OF THE SACRED TERRIGEN MISTS TO TRANSFORM THE ALPHA-PRIMITIVES, WHO INHABIT THESE CAVERNS, INTO HORRIBLE MUTATIONS!

SO THESE ARE THE MONSTERS THAT HAVE BEEN ATTACKING ATTILAN?

BUT WHY WOULD BLACK BOLT'S BROTHER TURN THE POWERS OF THE TERRIGEN MIST AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE?

LOOKS TA ME, STRETCH, THAT MAYBE OL' MAX HERE IS LOOKIN' TO TAKE HIS BROTHER'S PLACE ON THE THRONE!

AND HE'S MADE HIS OWN LITTLE PRIVATE ARMY TO FIGHT ANYONE WHO'D STAND IN HIS WAY!

PERHAPS AT ONE TIME, OUTWORLDER/ BUT NOW, EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED/ FOR YOU SEE, NOT ONLY CAN I CONTROL THE POWER OF THE TERRIGEN MISTS BUT I ALSO KNOW ITS *TERRIBLE* SECRET/

THE *GREAT DEVOURER* IS COMING/ AND UPON HIS ARRIVAL, WE SHALL ALL BE PUT TO THE TEST IN A TRIAL BY *FIRE* -- WHERE ONLY THE *STRONGEST* SHALL SURVIVE/

IT IS MY *DIVINE MISSION* TO USE THE POWERS OF THE TERRIGEN MIST TO EVOLVE THE PEOPLE OF ATTILAN, AS WELL AS ALL LIFE ON THIS PLANET, TO THEIR *HIGHEST* LEVEL SO WE MAY BE FOUND *WORTHY!*

AND END UP A RAVING *LUNATIC* LIKE YOU? I'LL TAKE LOOKIN' LIKE A BRICKYARD *ANY* DAY O' THE WEEK!

-- ESPECIALLY WHEN I'VE GOT THE MUSCLE TO PUT THE *KIBOSH* ON YOUR HOLINESS!

BEN, *WAIT!* THERE MAY STILL BE A WAY OF RESOLVING THIS SITUATION PEACEFULLY.

SEE IF *YOU* CAN REACH HIM, MEDUSA.

MAXIMUS, *END* THIS MADNESS.

ALL YOU WILL DO IS BRING *SHAME* AND *RUIN* UPON ATTILAN AND ALL INHUMANS BY SEEKING TO *USURP* YOUR BROTHER'S CROWN IN THIS MANNER.

ON THE *CONTRARY*, MEDUSA/ SINCE MY RECENT EXPOSURE TO THE TERRIGEN MIST, I ALONE HAVE THE *CLARITY* OF *VISION* TO SEE THE TRUTH. I AM THE ONLY *TRUE* SALVATION FOR OUR PEOPLE/ IT IS ONLY *PROPER* THAT I RULE ATTILAN/

AND ALL THOSE WHO WOULD *DARE* TO STAND *AGAINST* ME --

"— MUST BE DESTROYED!"

SO MUCH FER YER *PEACE* TALKS, REED.

GUESS THAT MEANS IT'S TIME TA *RUMBLE!*

IT WOULD INDEED, BEN GRIMM!

LET MAXIMUS' MINIONS NOW FEEL THE THUNDEROUS *MIGHT* OF MY *HOOF!*

KA THOOM

I HOPE YOU KNOW HOW TO *TAP DANCE*, GORGON, 'CAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOT A REGULAR *ARMY* OF THESE ALPHA-PRIMITIVES!

FWOOOSH

SO STOP FLAPPIN' YER TRAP, KID, AND START *TAKIN' CARE O' BUSINESS!*

IF WE'RE GONNA GET OUR MITTS ON MAXI, WE'LL HAFTA GET *THROUGH* ALL THESE GOONS *FIRST!*

WHAM

MAXIMUS! PUT AN *END* TO THIS INSANE ENDEAVOR!

YOUR WORDS ARE TO *NO AVAIL*, MY COUSIN!

KRAK

THEN LET MY *ACTIONS* SPEAK *FOR ME!*

FWIP

BEWARE, MY FRIENDS/

THESE CREATURES ATTACK WITH A *NEW-FOUND* CUNNING THAT IS *BEYOND* THEIR KEN/

WE'VE GOT TO COME UP WITH A STRATEGY TO *FIGHT* THESE MONSTERS/

THERE MAY NOT BE *TIME* FOR THAT, SUE.

MAXIMUS IS *EVIDENTLY* USING SOME FORM OF *TELEPATHY* TO CONTROL THESE CREATURES, WHICH MEANS HE CAN QUICKLY AND EASILY *ADAPT* TO *ANY* TACTIC WE USE AGAINST HIM.

OUR *BEST HOPE* IS TO *BREAK* HIS MIND-LINK WITH THE ALPHA-PRIMITIVES/

REED'S *RIGHT*/

MAXIMUS IS *SURROUNDING* HIMSELF WITH THESE MONSTERS AND *HIDING* HIMSELF BEHIND A WALL OF BODIES/

THERE'S *NO WAY* TO GET TO HIM/

CRYSTAL/ TRITON/ MEDUSA/

FOLLOW ME, COUSINS/ I WILL *SPEARHEAD* THE ATTACK AGAINST THIS BARRIER/

THWAK

LEAD ON, MY BROTHER/

WHUMP

GO TO IT, KARNAK!

BLACK BOLT AND THE REST OF US WILL *COVER* YOUR *FLANK!*

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO *HURRY*, THEY'RE COMING AT US FROM *EVERY* DIRECTION!

IT'LL ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY *OVERWHELM* US WITH THEIR NUMBERS!

IT AIN'T OVER JUST *YET*, SUZIE!

NOT WHILE THE EVER-LOVIN' *THING* IS STILL ON HIS *FEET!*

LIKE MY *AUNT PETUNIA* ALWAYS USED TA SAY...

"WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN, YA GOTTA PLAY THE HAND THAT *YER DEALT!*"

AND RIGHT NOW, MY CARDS ARE SHOWIN' THAT -- *IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!*

KA-BOOM

C'MERE, FIDO!

YOU LOOK LIKE YER ABOUT THE *RIGHT* SIZE FER THE JOB!

ROOAARR

WHUMPH

WHUMPH

WHUMPH

WHOOSH

LET'S SEE IF I CAN DO THE *BABE* AND THE OL' *BRONX BOMBERS* PROUD...

...BY *CLEARIN'* ALL THE BASES WITH A *GRAND SLAM!*

HEADS UP, YOU GUYS!

DIDN'T WANT YOU TO FEEL LEFT OUT --

-- SO I *SAVED* THIS LAST ONE FER YOU!

WILL YOU *JOIN* ME, GORGON?

SHOOP

RA-ARR-RA

THOOM

IT WOULD BE MY *PLEASURE,* LITTLE ONE!

YOUR REIGN OF TERROR IS AT AN *END*, MAXIMUS!

SURRENDER NOW AND PRESERVE WHAT LITTLE *HONOR* YOU HAVE LEFT!

Ah, CRYSTAL, SO YOU WOULD BETRAY ME *AS WELL*?

WHILE I DO NOT POSSESS YOUR *VAUNTED* ELEMENTAL POWERS...

AIIEEFF!

VSSSHH

...MY MIND BLAST SHOULD BE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO DEAL WITH YOU!

NOW THAT I *HAVE* MY PRIZE...

...IT IS TIME I TOOK MY LEAVE IF THE LADY MEDUSA SHALL NOT BE MY *QUEEN*...

...THEN HER SISTER WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO *DO*.

CRYSTAL!

NO!

FWSH

IF YOU'VE *HURT* HER, MAXIMUS, I'LL MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D *NEVER* BEEN *BORN*!

DO YOU *HEAR* ME?

THE *ONLY* THING I WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU, *OUTWORLDER*, IS YOUR *DYING BREATH*!

VRAASH

HURNNGH!

THE TUNNEL'S COLLAPSED!

JOHNNY!

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING GOING AFTER MAXIMUS ALONE LIKE THAT?!

YOU NEARLY GOT YOURSELF KILLED!

I — I ALMOST WISH I HAD.

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!

WHY NOT?!

CRYSTAL'S GONE! AND IT IS ALL MY FAULT!

WE ALL KNOW YOU DID EVERYTHING YOU COULD, JOHNNY.

YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND. I OWE HER MY LIFE! AND WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE TO DO THE SAME FOR HER —

— I BLEW IT!

DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF, LITTLE BROTHER. THIS FIGHT'S NOT OVER YET! ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WE'LL GET HER BACK. I PROMISE!

SO HOW DO WE GET THROUGH ALL THIS RUBBLE?

A DIFFICULT CHALLENGE, INDEED. EVEN I CANNOT SENSE THE FOCAL WEAK POINT FOR AN ATTACK AGAINST THIS WALL OF BOULDERS.

THEN WE SHALL HAVE TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE ONE STONE AT A TIME!

BUT BY THEN, IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE!

KEEP THE FAITH, KID!

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS!

STAND ASIDE, MY FRIENDS.

THERE IS ONLY ONE AMONG US WHO CAN HOPE TO SUCCEED IN THIS TASK.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN—

YES, OF COURSE, MEDUSA.

ONLY BLACK BOLT, THE MIGHTIEST OF THE INHUMANS, CAN HOPE TO BREACH SUCH AN INTRUSION.

ALL BY HIMSELF?

AYE, JOHNNY STORM.

FOR THE WORD OF BLACK BOLT IS MOST POTENT INDEED.

YOU WILL HAVE TO SHIELD US WITH YOUR POWERS, SUE STORM.

GOOD AS DONE, MEDUSA.

REED, DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT, DARLING.

"LOOK! IT'S INCREDIBLE! THE MEREST WHISPER UTTERED FROM BLACK BOLT'S LIPS...

"... HAS THE ENERGY TO PULVERIZE THOSE BOULDERS INTO PEBBLES!"

MEANWHILE DEEPER INSIDE THE CAVERN...

BEHOLD, CRYSTAL/ THE *CREATION DEVICE* -- THE SOURCE OF THE TERRIGEN MIST/

WITH IT, I *ALONE* WIELD THE POWER TO ADVANCE THE EVOLUTIONARY GROWTH OF *ANY* LIVING CREATURE ON THIS PLANET/

MAXIMUS, NO/ *STOP!* WHAT ARE YOU DOING --

AAIIEEEE!

I'M TRANSFORMING YOU, MY DEAR COUSIN -- ELEVATING YOU TO BECOME THE *QUEEN MOTHER* OF A NEW RACE OF BEINGS...

"...WHO SHALL FIRST [illegible] AND THEN THE WORLD/"

NOT IN THIS LIFETIME, PAL/ NOW LET HER GO/

KRAAASH

THE KID'S RIGHT, MAXI/ YER *DELUSIONS* OF GRANDEUR ARE IN FER ONE HARSH *REALITY CHECK!*

NO/ STAY BACK/ YOU CAN'T STOP ME/

NOT WHEN I'M SO CLOSE/ NOT WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE/

CRYSTAL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER?!

HELPING HER TO FULFILL HER DESTINY, YOU FOOL!

OVER MY DEAD BODY!

IF YOU WISH. BUT YOUR FEELINGS BLIND YOU TO THE TRUTH, OUTWORLDER.

FOR YOU SEE, WITHOUT MY HELP, SHE WILL PERISH AT THE HANDS OF THE GREAT DEVOURER!

INSOLENT PUP! I AM HER ONLY SALVATION!

I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYONE HURT HER! DO YOU HEAR ME?!

ALL YOU ARE IS A TRAITOR TO YOUR PEOPLE AND TO YOUR OWN BROTHER!

I COULDN'T STOP YOU FROM TAKING HER FROM ME BEFORE —

— BUT TRUST ME, THAT WON'T EVER HAPPEN AGAIN!

HM

AARRGGH!

NICE WORK, JOHNNY. HOW IS SHE DOING, KARNAK?

THANK AGON, SHE'S STILL BREATHING. BUT THERE'S NO *TELLING* WHAT THIS DEVICE MAY HAVE *DONE* TO HER.

WE MUST TAKE HER BACK TO THE PALACE WITH ALL DUE HASTE

WHA— WHAT I CAN DO?!

YOU HAVE SAVED MY SISTER FROM THE TRAGIC FATE THAT BEFELL MAXIMUS...

... BUT NOW IT IS TIME FOR OUR *HEALERS* TO DO THEIR WORK.

THEN WE'D BETTER GET GOING —

REED, WHAT'S WRONG WITH BLACK BOLT?

I'M AFRAID HE HAS A MOST DIFFICULT DECISION TO MAKE, MY LOVE.

WHADDYA TALKIN' ABOUT, STRETCH?

HE KNOWS WHAT THIS DEVICE HAS DONE TO THE ALPHA-PRIMITIVES, AS WELL AS HIS OWN *BROTHER*, BEN. NOW BLACK BOLT MUST *DECIDE* WHETHER TO DESTROY IT AND PUT THE FUTURE *SURVIVAL* OF THE INHUMANS AT *RISK*...

... OR ALLOW IT TO *STAND*, WHICH COULD PLACE THE ENTIRE WORLD IN JEOPARDY.

HOW CAN ANYONE BE *EXPECTED* TO *MAKE* THAT KIND OF CHOICE?

AS THE *RULER* OF THE INHUMANS, IT'S ONE HE *MUST* MAKE NONE-THELESS.

BACK AT THE ROYAL PALACE.

'TIS A *JOYOUS DAY* INDEED FOR *ALL* THE INHUMANS OF ATTILAN/ A TIME FOR *CELEBRATION* WITH *FEAST* AND *SONG!*

IN *HONOR* OF YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS, REED RICHARDS, THE ROYAL HOUSE DECLARES THAT *THIS DAY* SHALL BE A HOLIDAY OF THE *CELEBRATION* OF *LIFE!*

THANK YOU, LADY MEDUSA.

ESPECIALLY FOR WHAT YOU DID FOR JOHNNY.

IT IS AN HONOR TO BE *WELCOMED* GUESTS IN YOUR MAGNIFICENT CITY

ALL RIGHT, ALREADY! ENOUGH O' THE DANCIN' IN THE STREETS! SO WHEN DO WE START THIS *FEASTING?*

IT SHALL BE YOURS, MY [illegible]

THIS FOOD IS DELICIOUS

IT'S *AMAZING* TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THESE SOY AND RICE PRODUCTS.

SURE, IF YER A FLAMIN' *VEGETARIAN* WHO DON'T MIND EATIN' BIRD FOOD!

WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE FER A NICE JUICY *CHEESE-BURGER* RIGHT NOW!

THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

KNOW THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER OUT-WORLDERS...

...BUT WELCOMED *FRIENDS* HERE IN ATTILAN.

JUST AS YOU ARE IN OUR HOME.

REST ASSURED THAT YOUR SECRETS ARE SAFE WITH US.

I WISH YOU WERE COMING BACK WITH ME.

I'D LIKE THAT TOO.

BUT I'M STILL RECOVERING FROM MY INJURIES. WHAT'S MORE, AS A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, I NEED TO BE WITH MY PEOPLE DURING THIS TIME OF CHANGE

I UNDERSTAND, CRYSTAL.

BUT I'LL STILL MISS YOU.

AS I YOU, JOHNNY.

I'M PUZZLED, KARNAK.

WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE SEES IN HIM?

PERHAPS SOME SORT OF INNER BEAUTY, GORGON.

DESPITE ALL OUTWARD APPEARANCES, THE YOUTH DOES POSSESS THE HEART OF A HERO.

'TIS TRUE.

Eh?/ Err, GREETINGS, BEN GRIMM.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR YOUR YOUNG COMRADE?

ACTUALLY, I WUZ TRYIN' TA GIVE HIM SOME SPACE!

C'MON GUYS! WHADDYA SAY WE GIVE 'EM A LITTLE PRIVACY?

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS.

LOCKJAW HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO TAKE YOU HOME.

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN/

ZZZZNNNNN

YES.

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.

I SHALL MISS THEM.

THEY WEREN'T BAD...

... FOR OUT-WORLDERS.

WE ARE DOOMED!

DO YOU HEAR ME?!

THE ACCURSED OUTWORLDERS HAVE SEALED OUR FATE!

COME ALONG, MAXIMUS...

... OR THE HEALER WILL HAVE TO INCREASE THE DOSAGE OF YOUR MEDICATION.

YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME! RELEASE ME BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THE END IS NEAR!

THE GREAT DEVOURER!

HE IS —

COMING!

EPILOGUE.

LATVERIA.

AFTER TWO MONTHS OF NON-STOP WORK, THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CASTLE DOOM IS ALMOST COMPLETE.

THE SYMBOLIC SEAT OF VICTOR VON DOOM'S POWER, THIS CENTURIES OLD CITADEL WAS NEARLY DESTROYED IN A CLASH OF COSMIC FORCES...

...WHILE DOCTOR DOOM AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR WERE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE BETWEEN THE SILVER SURFER AND THE SUPER SKRULL.

AS SEEN IN FF #6.

ONLY THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE SILVER SURFER WOULD SPARE DOOM'S LIFE WHILE THE REST OF HIS WORLD COLLAPSED AROUND HIM.

BUT VICTOR VON DOOM'S INDOMITABLE SENSE OF PURPOSE AND IRON WILL QUICKLY SET HIM INTO MOTION TO REBUILD HIS DOMAIN.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, REFURBISHING HIS PRIZED LABORATORY IN ORDER TO CARRY ON WITH HIS EXPLORATION OF THE BLACK ARTS.

ZZZRRRAAAPP

UNTIL NOW —

Eh? WHAT IS THIS?/

WHO DARES INTRUDE UPON MY INNER SANCTUM?/

BEEP BEEP BEEP VEEEEEP

KCHANG

I MADE IT/ THE PLAN WORKED/ JUST AS I ANTICIPATED.

WHAT MISCHIEF IS THIS?/ YOU DARE TO IMPERSONATE ME?/ FOOL/ YOUR LIFE IS FORFEIT FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. I —

SILENCE/ I HAVE TOO LITTLE TIME SO YOU MUST LISTEN CAREFULLY/

THERE IS MUCH FOR YOU TO LEARN/

YOUR ARMOR — IT'S HEAVILY DAMAGED. HOW COULD SUCH A THING HAVE HAPPENED?

EVERYTHING YOU WILL NEED TO KNOW IS ON THIS ***MEMORY CARD!*** BUT YOU MUST ACT ***QUICKLY!*** DO NOT ***SQUANDER*** THIS OPPORTUNITY/

WAIT/

I CANNOT/ NOT — ENOUGH —

IZZRRRAAAAPP

— TIME/

FASCINATING. I KNOW I HAVE SEEN THIS BEFORE.

VVVSSSHH

SIR! SENSORS HAVE DETECTED AN INTRUDER IN YOUR CHAMBERS --

-- BUT NOW WE HAVE LOST THE SIGNAL!

BEGONE, YOU MECHANOID CLODS! YOU'RE USELESS TO ME NOW!

REPORT TO THE PROGRAMMER TO HAVE YOUR RESPONSE TIME RECONFIGURED.

AS YOU COMMAND!

THIS IS A MATTER BEYOND THE COMPREHENSION OF YOUR SIMPLE SILICON CIRCUITRY...

...WHICH MAY INSTEAD INVOLVE A KEY ELEMENT OF MY MOST RECENT PROJECT! MY CHRONO-DISPLACEMENT MECHANISM.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A MORE *ADVANCED* VERSION OF MY ORIGINAL CONTROL CARD.

I WONDER...

ZZZIRRRRAAAAPP

...IF I WERE TO *REPLACE* MY OWN UNIT WITH THIS *NEW* ONE... WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

MOST INTRIGUING!

TO BE CONTINUED...